

Taking the **MYSTERY** out of Grant Writing

Practical Tips for the Park and Recreation Professional

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Workshop Objectives:

Participants will learn

- ✓ The basic components of effective grant writing;
- ✓ Time saving research steps; and
- ✓ The fundamentals of the initial contact, proposal and format, budget, and how to make your presentation more clear and concise.



"The first rule of effective communication is: know your audience. When you answer a government-agency RFP, you have a much higher likelihood of success if you present your proposal with each of the three tiers of reviewers in mind: mistake finders, proposal evaluators, and decision makers."

from Best Practices, American Institute of Architects, Washington D.C., March 3, 2003

Grant Basics

- ▼ What are grants? Grants should be considered supplemental funds. They provide alternative services, facilities, offer new and continuing programs, or conduct innovative research. Many grants are 'competitive', although there are 'line item' grant funds, too. For the purpose of this presentation, we are looking at competitive grants.



Advice from DPR's Office of Grants and Local Services, *“have your project fit the granting agency's guidelines; don't ‘shotgun’ your project to lots of funding sources. Any questions, ask the project officer.”*



▼ Grants are not randomly distributed.

Organizations and agencies have to apply for them
— even if they are a legislative line item.

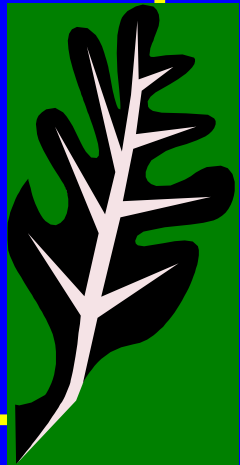
▼ Providers include:

- ✓ Private Foundations (David and Lucille Packard Foundation)
- ✓ Corporations (Target, Teichert, Raley's-Bel Air)
- ✓ Charitable groups (Lions, Soroptomists, faith-based organizations)
- ✓ Federal, state and local governments

▼ Can grants be used for capital projects?

Absolutely, many are for acquisition, renovation and development purposes. Many governmental grants can be used to fund projects such as park facility improvements such as trails, structures and boat ramps.

- ▼ What about park maintenance? Generally, park maintenance funds are not available through most governmental or corporation grant sources. You may have better luck through foundation or charitable grant funding sources.

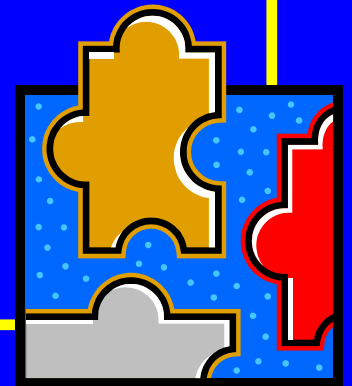


▼ What about matching funds? Match requirements vary among programs, but generally, in-lieu contributions or...

THE MORE FUNDS OR
DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT OF
TIME, THE BETTER CHANCES
YOU'LL HAVE IN GETTING YOUR
GRANT!

▼ Do grants need to be repaid, like loans?

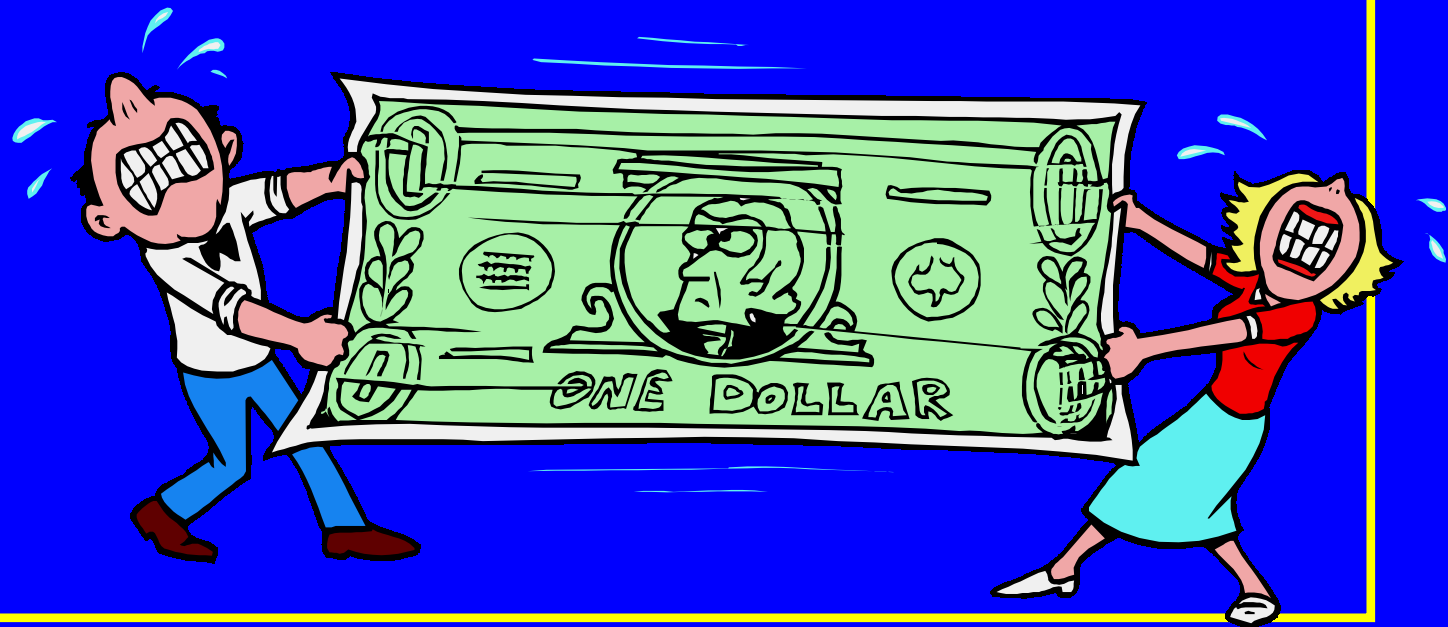
Most grants do not need to be repaid, unless specifically designated as a “loan.” Typically these “loan grants” are for the up-front funding of a project thereby allowing the applicant to move quickly before an opportunity is lost.



Depending on the funding source, grants may be reimbursable, meaning you may need to front the entire cost of the project. Most grants that require a match will be reimbursable.

Grants are for specific purposes. They are usually classified as either 'block' or 'categorical' and are project oriented. Many grants are competitive.

▼ Are all grants the same? Nope. Funding amounts, use restrictions, funding cycles and steps for requesting grants vary among granting entities. Yet the process of applying for them is very much the same.



▼ Do grants provide support for programs?

Yes, however your best bet is to research foundations or charitable organizations for social, educational or interpretive program funding related to the park and recreation field.

Program funds may also be found through governmental agencies such as law enforcement, education, health and welfare and social services.

Be Part of the Solution:

Four significant trends to link your recreation *program* project:

- Youth obesity and physical and emotional health;
- At risk youth, juvenile delinquency, truancy and youth related - illicit behavior;
- Diversity of needs and audience; and.
- Develop a collaborative effort with others.



Suggested grant providers related to health and welfare and criminal justice:

- ▼ Web site, www.fundsnetsservices.com AmerUS Group, AT&T Foundation, Bristol Meyers, Gannett Foundation and Ronald McDonald Charities;
- ▼ Web site for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, www.ojjdp.ncjrs.org/jump; and
- ▼ Web site for the Department of Health and Human Services; Child Care and Development Fund, www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs; Family and Community Violence Prevention Program, www.fcvp.org 21st Century Community Learning Centers, www.ed.gov/21stcclc.

A fast word about partnerships...

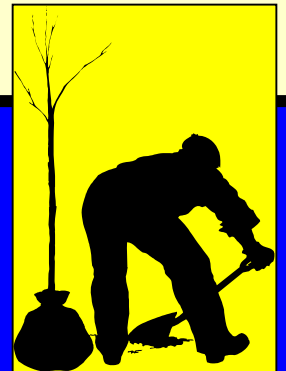
- ▼ Consider asking a ‘friends of group’ to be the funding applicant.

Many granting agencies *encourage* and *reward* the collaborative effort during the evaluation scoring process. In addition, developing early on a relationship for on-going involvement is important to the overall success of the project.



For capital improvement projects, explain:

- ▼ How it will be built, operated and maintained.
- ▼ Who it will serve and what their needs are.
- ▼ What the measurable objective is if it is a program or resource improvement grant, such as improved learning scores, miles of stream bank restored.
- ▼ The environmental review process. Prepare elements of CEQA/NEPA.



Explain...

- ✓ CEQA - project has completed CEQA process
- ✓ Describe land tenure - contains assurances that land tenure arrangement (fee simple - *your agency owns it*, less than fee simple - *easement*, and long-term lease/MOU) is sufficient for period intended by grant.
 - ✓ Funds needed - grant request *completes rather than initiates* fund-drive or that the grant request is sufficient to leverage remaining donations needed.

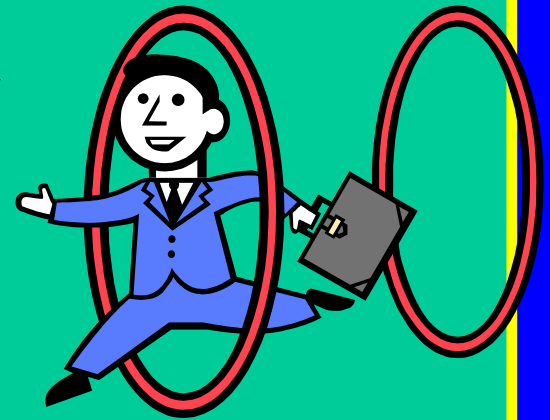
A word to the wise...

Granting agencies generally do not want funds tied up for years and years while the applicant seeks other funding sources.

Go for the most secure funding (often a governmental grant), with this in hand, then seek additional funding sources.

Look *long-range*, get one or two small successes under your belt to show credibility.

Funders are looking for grant proposals that demonstrate project readiness, if the project has strong community support and if the project is consistent with long range planning. For example, if the grant is for a trail, does the park have a general plan? Have you spoken to key trail users and do you have their support? Be prepared to address how the funder will be recognized for their contribution.



Researching Park and Recreation Funding Sources



Research Tips:



1. Get Organized
2. Link your project to the grantor's purpose
3. Identify funding sources, budget, timeframe
4. Contact potential funding sources for project clarification or an initial discussion meeting.

1. Get Organized

Begin by identifying funding sources by speaking to colleagues, looking on line and at grant-making directories.



2. Link your project to the grantor's purpose



Research the goals, values, and mission of a foundation or granting entity. Does the grantor's philosophy align with those of your project?

3. Identify your:

- ✓ Budget
- ✓ Timeframe
- ✓ Desired ‘end results’, and
- ✓ *Who* else is involved and the potential for lasting relationships



4. Connect with the granting agency

1. Some may require an initial meeting. Be ready to show how providing support for your project is a natural extension of their philosophy and mission.
2. Choose participants carefully — bring an expert staff person, influential activist or someone with a connection to the grantor.
3. Consider presenting a joint venture with other grant seekers. This further strengthens the partnership emphasis.

A few words about your proposal:

1. Be thorough — the proposal explains *why* a project is being undertaken, *what* will be accomplished, and *who* or *what* will benefit. Be ready to document your agency's strengths in managing ongoing costs and conducting public outreach.



2. Customize your project to fit the philosophy of the grant maker.

Remember, preparing a grant application is much like following a recipe — do what is being asked of you — use their format, answer the questions clearly and succinctly and follow their directions and you'll do fine.



Importance in Describing your Organization

Provide a brief description of your agency, the project and a phrase about your agency's credibility. Describe your organizations' history, programs and populations served.



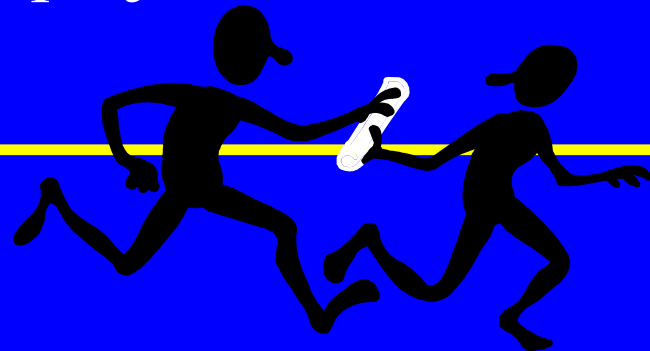
Be clear in describing your project in the Proposal

- ✓ Concisely describe the need for the project.
- ✓ Explain *what you are going to do and how you are going to do it.*
- ✓ Project accurately and openly - be honest!
- ✓ Outline specific methodology steps used to implement the project.
- ✓ The population that will be served and how they will benefit from the completed project.



Elaborate on...

- ✓ Specific responsibilities — *not expectations* of each partner. Submit letters of commitment and MOU's from partners.
- ✓ The unique characteristics of your project.
- ✓ How you will complete the project within the funding period.



...and explain...

- ✓ Personnel, materials, and other resources you will need to implement the project. Identify those that you and your partners already have and those which need funding.
- ✓ Which costs will be charged to matching funds, in-kind matches, or other funding sources.

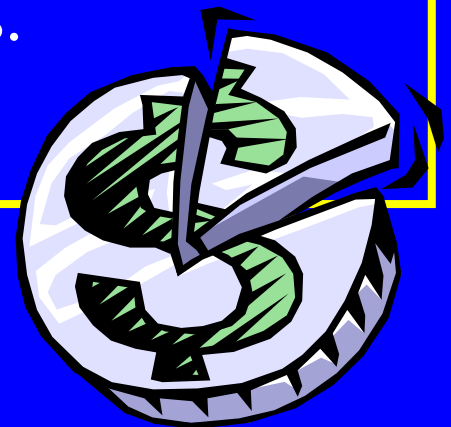
Tackling the Budget

- ✓ Develop a **realistic** and **easily understood** budget.
- ✓ Identify what your agency and others will contribute.
- ✓ Identify and describe matching funds. Document both matching funds that are provided in cash and those represented by in-kind contributions and other non-cash support.



Presenting Your Grant Budget

- ✓ Present in such a manner that someone unfamiliar with your organization will understand it.
- ✓ Don't include unallowed items.
- ✓ Discuss ongoing operation and maintenance.
- ✓ Watch personnel and travel expenses - red flag!
- ✓ Review budget for mathematical errors.



Now you're ready for 'Layout Basics'

The ideal proposal format should be easily 'skimmable'.

Try breaking up the proposal with indentations, underlining, italics, bullets, section titles, photographs and graphics.

Quick Layout Tips:

1. Follow format requirements for page and font size and pagination.
2. Do not exceed the page limits specified and do not submit in binders unless asked.
3. Spell out acronyms initially.
4. Check for typographical and grammatical errors.
5. Make sure everything is signed.
6. Provide maps and photos.

A few more...

7. Make sure all environmental documentation is included.
8. Include letters of support (*remember quality, not quantity*).
9. Submit requested number of copies.
10. Watch professional jargon, abbreviations; avoid bureaucratese.



Ever Wonder about the Evaluation Process?

Evaluation panels often select projects with a clearly defined purpose that can be accomplished, rather than projects that attempt to address multiple priorities and are ready to go.

Evaluators also look for...

A clear, well-written proposal; whether it is consistent with their mission, and if the applicant completed all sections of the guidelines correctly and provided all the material that was asked for in the guidebooks. For instance, if a map is requested, by all means include one.

Finally...

To make your proposal more competitive, **emphasize** community support and volunteer assistance (e.g., press articles, mission statements and the like.) Be innovative in your approach and explain how your agency will sustain the project in future years.



Five Common Reasons *Why* Proposals are Rejected

1. Applicant did not follow the guidelines provided by the funding agency.

2. Application lacked credibility.

3. Project or program was not adequately or clearly explained.

4. There simply just was not enough money to go around.



And...

5. Project appeared to be too ambitious for the projected cost; budget cost estimates were poorly supported; or the applicant did not appear to be ready or well organized to take the project through to completion.

